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Item 2(a) of the provisional agenda

Review of the implementation of the programme of work 2018-2019

Review and follow-up to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, the New Urban Agenda,
the Geneva UN Charter on Sustainable Housing and other relevant agreements

Activities of the Committee on Housing and Land Management since the seventy-eighth session and its future activities for 2019-2020

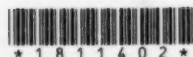
Note by the secretariat

Summary

This document provides information on the Committee's activities since the seventy-eighth session, and outlines a proposed workplan for 2019 and 2020.

The Committee is invited to take note of the information on the implemented activities and to approve the proposed activities.

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I. Implementation of the Programme of Work 2018-2019

A. Review of and follow-up to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development, the Geneva UN Charter on Sustainable Housing and other relevant agreements

1. Regional level review and implementation

1. The adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development by the United Nations General Assembly in 2015, the New Urban Agenda in 2016 and other key international agreements established new policy frameworks for the Committee's activities on sustainable housing and urban development. In 2017 and 2018, the Committee worked to promote an integrated and coordinated approach to the implementation of all relevant commitments at the global, national, regional, sub-regional and local levels, as required for meeting the objectives of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the New Urban Agenda and others.

2. To discuss approaches to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, the Committee secretariat:

(a) Coordinated the organisation of two roundtables on SDG 11 on "Financing the transition to sustainable cities and communities: challenges and opportunities" and "Promoting resilient and sustainable cities and human settlements: intersectoral cooperation and evidence-based policies" at the Regional Forum on Sustainable Development for the ECE Region (Geneva, 1 and 2 March 2018).¹ The roundtables were organised in close cooperation with other ECE divisions, UN agencies, including UN-Habitat and UNISDR, along with the Council of Europe Bank, Union of Cities and Local Governments and other partners; and

(b) Supported the organisation and participated in side events on affordable housing (organised by the Government of Bahrain and UN-Habitat) and smart sustainable cities (organised by the International Telecommunication Union) at the UN High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (New York, 8-19 July 2018).²

3. Further, the secretariat participated in Expert Group Meetings organised by UN-Habitat in March and May 2018 through which it provided input into the preparation of two UN reports: the First quadrennial report on the progress of the implementation of the New Urban Agenda - Progress on the implementation of the New Urban Agenda: report of the Secretary-General (A/73/83-E/2018/62)³ and the SDG 11 Synthesis Report High Level Political Forum 2018 - Tracking progress towards Inclusive, Safe, Resilient and Sustainable Cities and Human Settlements⁴ respectively.

4. The above mentioned high-level events were instrumental in developing common approaches with other UN agencies, ECE divisions and other partner organisations to foster the implementation of the global agreements.

5. The Charter Centres of Excellence on Sustainable Housing in Glasgow, UK and Tallinn, Estonia continued supporting the Committee in the implementation of the 2030

¹ <https://www.unece.org/rfsd2018.html>

² <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/hlpf/2018>

³ https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/1628008/files/A_73_83&E_2018_62-EN.pdf

⁴ https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/194452018_HLPF_Thematic_Review_of_SDG_11_UNHabitat_12_June_2018_original.pdf

Agenda, the Geneva UN Charter on Sustainable Housing⁵ and other agreements through active dissemination of information on the Charter and its principles (e.g. publications, media outreach, and national and local events), organising capacity building and networking activities, providing advisory services to stakeholders, regional and local authorities, and by conducting relevant studies. The highlights of the centres' activities in 2017-2018 were: the launch of a publication by the Glasgow centre "Living in the Social City: Adapt – Renew – Replace?"⁶, which examines issues related to the provision of affordable housing through refurbishment of older outdated housing stock; organisation of the joint workshop with the UN Charter centre in Tallinn and Housing Europe Federation on housing systems in countries with economies in transition (Tallinn, 6 June 2018). Charter centres are to be established in other countries including Armenia and Belarus.

6. The Committee has begun work on the implementation of the Geneva Ministerial Declaration on Sustainable Housing and Urban Development⁷, which was adopted by Ministers and Heads of Delegation at the Ministerial Segment of the seventy-eighth session of the Committee on Housing and Land Management on 9 November 2017. The Ministerial Declaration reiterates the importance for governments at all levels and relevant stakeholders in the ECE region to promote the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the New Urban Agenda, the Geneva UN Charter on Sustainable Housing and other relevant global and regional commitments. The Declaration underlines the importance of regularly monitoring and following up on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and other agreements. Hence, for that purpose, there is a need to support strengthening the capacity of national governments, improving mechanisms for information exchange, using monitoring tools that ensure a coherent methodology for review, and to follow up across the region for global comparability.

7. To support the implementation of the Declaration, the Committee Bureau and secretariat proposed for the establishment of a regional observatory on urban related SDGs for the ECE Region. The Committee secretariat also conducted a survey on the practice of member States (ECE/HBP/2018/Inf.1) and a draft Guidance document (ECE/HBP/2018/2) which provides recommendations for the alignment of the Committee's activities with Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development, The New Urban Agenda, the Geneva UN Charter on Sustainable Housing and other key agreements within its existing mandate. A draft policy paper along with Guidelines for data collection process for evidence-based housing and urban development policies were also prepared within the ECE-UN-Habitat joint project "Evidence-based policies for sustainable housing and urban development in selected countries with economies in transition". This initiative was supported by the UN Development Account 10th tranche project (ECE/HBP/2018/Inf.2).

2. National level review - Country Profiles on Housing and Land Management

8. The Country Profile on the Housing Sector of Kazakhstan was completed in 2018. Its findings and recommendations were launched at the Housing and Public Utilities Expo-2017 in November 2017. They were also presented and discussed at the Astana Economic Forum in May 2018.

⁵ The Geneva UN Charter on Sustainable Housing (E/ECE/1478/Rev.1), a non-legally binding document that aims to support member States as they seek to ensure access to decent, adequate, affordable and healthy housing for all, was endorsed by the UNECE in 2015.

⁶ "Living in the Social City: Adapt – Renew – Replace?" Wilson, J. Turner, J & Chau, J, with Evans, B.M. (editor), Glasgow Urban Laboratory, ISBN 978 1 9996221 0 7, 2018.

⁷ http://www.uncece.org/fileadmin/DAM/hlm/sessions/docs2017/ECE_HBP_2017_1_ENG_cover.pdf

9. Guidelines for the preparation of the ECE Country Profiles on Housing, Urban Development and Land Management were updated and endorsed by the Committee in 2017. This includes recommendations for a review of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda through the Country Profiles.

10. A draft of the Country Profile on Housing and Land Management of Belarus was prepared (ECE/HBP/2018/4 (Executive Summary) and ECE/HBP/2018/ Inf.14 (the draft Country Profile), which applied the updated guidelines. The preliminary mission was organised in December 2017. The research missions were carried out in May-June 2018 in Minsk and Grodno.

B. Sustainable housing and real estate markets

1. Affordable and social housing

11. A study on housing for migrants is being finalised in 2018. The study was prepared with the support of the City of Vienna and the Swiss Federal Office for Housing. The 'Housing for Migrants Study' examines the current challenges and practices in housing migrants in the ECE region and formulates recommendations to better accommodate migrants. The study underlines the importance of the engagement of beneficiaries in housing projects as well as the host communities in the integration process for migrants.

12. The Guidelines on the Management and Ownership of Condominium Housing were developed by the Committee's Real Estate Market Advisory Group (ECE/HBP/2018/ Inf.3). Based on the Guidelines, an international training programme on the management of condominium housing is being developed. A series of meetings and training events were also organised in relation to the Guidelines.

13. An international Conference "Promoting access to affordable and decent housing through the implementation of the Geneva UN Charter on Sustainable Housing" was organised in cooperation with City of Vienna (Vienna, 12-13 April 2018). The conference adopted Vienna's Message "Quality Living for All: on Access to Adequate, Affordable and Decent Housing". A panel on housing affordability as part of the Conference of the European Real Estate Society was organised by the Real Estate Market Advisory Group (27-30 June 2018, Reading, UK). A subregional workshop on affordable housing for Central Asia was organised jointly with Housing Initiative for Eastern Europe⁸ and UNDP Kazakhstan in September 2018 in Almaty, Kazakhstan. National workshops on housing policies were held in Astana, Kazakhstan, in April 2018 and September 2018. The aim of the workshops was to support the implementation of policy recommendations of the ECE Country Profile on the Housing Sector of Kazakhstan.

14. World Habitat Day 2018 was the occasion to raise awareness on the importance of ensuring that vulnerable populations, especially the homeless, are adequately housed. The celebrations consisted of an opening of "Without Walls: an exhibition of photographs by women affected by homelessness" in association with Café Art, United Nations Office at Geneva and other UN agencies. The exhibition emphasised on the importance of alleviating homelessness through the implementation of the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development including the Sustainable Development Goals and the Geneva UN Charter on Sustainable Housing. The exhibition also highlighted the intersection of the Sustainable Development Goals 5 Gender Equality and SDG 11 Sustainable Cities. The issue of homelessness was also explored at a high-level panel event featuring eminent speakers from diverse backgrounds: architects, NGOs, government and private sector, to explain the different

⁸ www.iwoev.org

dimensions of homelessness and pose innovative solutions through 3D-printed housing, policy and social housing schemes to alleviate homelessness. The panel event was organised in association with UN Library as a Library Talk.

2. Fire safety standards in buildings

15. In 2017, following the Grenfell Tower fire tragedy in London, a group of private and not-for-profit organisations responsible for research, development, publicity, and implementation of International Fire Safety Standards for construction and real estate sectors established a coalition, the aim of which is to promote the creation, maintenance, and use of high quality international standards. Further, the standards are to be developed through transparent and inclusive standard setting process. In July 2018, the International Fire Safety Standards (IFSS) Coalition organised its official 'launch' event at Palais des Nations under the umbrella of the Committee on Housing and Land Management. The Coalition is expected to develop a new, high level international standard, which aim to provide greater clarity and global consistency in the application of fire safety in building projects at a state, national, regional or international level.

3. Energy efficiency in buildings

16. Through generous contributions from Denmark and the Russian Federation for the "Energy Efficiency Standards in Buildings in the ECE Region" project, the Joint Task Force on Energy-Efficiency Standards in Buildings of the ECE Committee on Housing and Land Management and the ECE Committee on Sustainable Energy (through its Group of Experts on Energy Efficiency) continued its crucial work. In 2018, the group developed the study on mapping energy efficiency standards in buildings in the ECE region, in English and Russian. The JTF is currently working on a study on best practices to enhance energy efficiency standards in buildings, a study on mapping of existing technology to support energy efficiency in buildings, and on the creation of a database of energy efficiency experts.

17. After the first Joint Task Force meeting in Geneva on 30 and 31 October 2017, the Joint Task Force met on:

- 14-15 May in Yerevan, Armenia to validate the results of the study on mapping of energy efficiency standards in buildings in the ECE region;
- 3 October in Geneva back-to-back with this Committee session to validate the results of the mapping of existing technology to support energy efficiency in buildings;
- 13-14 November in Kiev, Ukraine within the 9th Forum on Energy for Sustainable Development.

18. In addition to these activities, the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organisation (BSEC) has provided funding for the project "Promoting the application of high-performance energy efficiency standards in buildings in BSEC member States". The activities under this project will be carried out by the Joint Task Force. They include:

- The development of a training course programme on high-performance energy efficiency standards in buildings in the ECE region
- The organization of a 2-3-day training seminar for policy makers and building sector professionals in application of high-performance building standards, St-Petersburg, Russian Federation, from 5 to 7 September 2018.

4. Work of the Real Estate Market Advisory Group (REM)

19. Since the seventy-eighth session of the Committee, the REM worked on three main studies in accordance with its Programme of Work (ECE/HBP/2016/3). The studies are to be finalised in 2018 and published in 2019. These studies are:

- Update of the Policy Framework on Real Estate Markets;
- Guidelines on Condominium Management;
- Guidelines on tools and mechanisms to finance smart sustainable cities projects. This study was developed in the framework of the United for Smart Sustainable Cities initiative.

20. REM was also involved in the activities of the Joint Task Force on Energy Efficiency Standards in buildings and provided input to the surveys, and revised the reports produced under the work of this group.

21. REM further participated in and/or organized the following events:

- the training event "The management of multi-apartment high rise housing stock: localizing the SDG11 and the NUA through housing strategies in countries undergoing economic transition", 11 February 2018, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, within the World Urban Forum 9;
- Vienna Conference on Sustainable Housing: "Promoting access to affordable and decent housing through the implementation of the Geneva UN Charter on Sustainable Housing", 12-13 April 2018, Vienna, Austria
- ECE panel on Housing Affordability during the 25th annual Conference of the European Real Estate Society (ERES) in Reading, U.K., on 28 June 2018.

22. The Real Estate Market Advisory Group implements its activities with the support of its subgroups:

- subgroup 1 on energy efficiency in buildings and implementation of housing policies in Eastern Europe
- subgroup 2 on the dissemination of the Geneva UN Charter on Sustainable Housing and support to its Centres of Excellence
- subgroup 3 on land markets and land administration
- subgroup 4 on sustainable urban development and smart cities financing
- subgroup 5 on affordable and social housing
- subgroup 6 on registration, property valuation and cooperation with the Working Party on Land Administration; and
- subgroup 7 on housing finance.

C. Sustainable urban development

1. Implementation of the New Urban Agenda

23. The Committee was actively involved in the Ninth World Urban Forum (Kuala-Lumpur, 7-13 February 2018). The aim of the World Urban Forum was to review the status of the implementation of the New Urban Agenda. The secretariat organized training sessions and side events jointly with UN-Habitat and other partners to support the creation

and consolidation of platforms towards the implementation of the New Urban Agenda, and develop roadmaps and follow up mechanisms for different stakeholder groups:

- Dissemination of New Urban Agenda in the Balkans, 8 February
- Special session: Security of tenure, land market and segregation, 9 February
- Launch the 11th tranche Development Account project on Housing Policy Thursday, 9 February
- Sustainable Cities: Hubs of Innovation, Low Carbon Industrialization and Climate Action, 11 February
- Low carbon and energy efficient cities Rethink and reimagine our cities Tuesday 13 February 2018.

2. Smart sustainable cities

24. In the framework of the "United for Smart Sustainable Cities" (U4SSC) initiative, the secretariat, together with the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), and the other 16 UN bodies, who are involved with the U4SSC initiative, developed the following studies:

- Guidelines on tools and mechanisms to finance smart sustainable cities projects (which is also part of the programme of work of REM)

25. Currently the groups are working on four other outputs:

- Guidelines for circular cities (secretariat support provided by ECE)
- City Science Application Framework (secretariat support provided by ITU)
- The impact of Sensing technologies and IoT in Cities (secretariat support provided by UN-Habitat)
- Blockchain for cities (secretariat provided by UNU).

26. The initiative held its third meeting in Malaga, Spain on 26 April 2018. In this meeting the updated Terms of Reference, along with the action plan for 2018-2019 for the initiative have been approved.

27. The ECE also finalised the smart sustainable city profile for the city of Voznesensk in Ukraine. Results of the study and policy recommendations will be launched in Kiev in November 2018. The secretariat is also working to develop the Guidelines for the City Action Plan along with the preparation of the City Action Plan for Goris, Armenia. These projects will commence soon.

28. The ECE together with the Organization for International Economic Relations (OIER) launched the first United Smart Cities Lab in Vienna in April 2018. The ECE, together with UN-Habitat and other partners, are working to create a smart city district in Astana, Kazakhstan.

D. Sustainable land administration and management

1. Working Party on Land Administration (WPLA) session and workshops

29. The Working Party organized the "Joint Workshop of ECE WPLA, FAO and LANDNET" in Skopje, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia 19-21 June 2018. The workshop focused on "Best practices on land consolidation legislation" the workshop presented and discussed the preliminary results of the joint research project on Land Consolidation that currently is being carried out by FAO, Technical University of Munich

and WPLA. Gender principles and issues in land governance in the Western Balkans including work on SDG indicator 5.a.2 project in cooperation with FAO and GIZ was presented at the joint conference.

30. The Working Party is actively contributing to the work of the United Nations Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management Expert Group on Land Administration and Management (UNGGIM) and participated in the UNGGIM Europe Executive Committee Meeting on November 2017 in Geneva.

31. The Working Party presented on its work at the First Arab Land Conference organised by the World Bank, the Global Land Tool Network, UN-Habitat, the Arab League and the Arab Union of Surveyors (Dubai, 26-28 February 2018). The World Bank Conference on Land and Poverty (Washington, D.C., 19-23 March 2018).

2. Land Administration Reviews

32. The review of the land administration and real estate markets in Belarus was developed by experts from the Netherlands and the Russian Federation. The land administration review will be published as a chapter in the Country Profile for Belarus.

3. Studies on selected topics in land management

33. The WPLA continued its activities on the preparation of Informal Development: Guidelines for formalization of informal constructions in the ECE Region, which was finalised in 2018.

34. Research on the Future Scenarios in land administration held a roundtable held in Stockholm, Sweden 15 June 2018. Results will be presented at the WPLA workshop in Athens, Greece in November 2018.

35. Study on the cost for registration and transfer of real estate and registration of mortgages in the ECE countries, benchmarking study was carried out in 2018 and will be published in 2019.

36. Study on the Challenges of Fraud to Land Administration Institutions (July 2011) is being updated and a new version was prepared. The revised publication will be published in 2019.

4. WPLA Task Groups

37. The WPLA implemented its activities with the support of its Task Groups:

- (a) Group for Outreach and Promotion
- (b) Group for Benchmarking of land administration systems
- (c) Group for cooperation between the Working Party and the Real Estate Market Advisory Board
- (d) Group on Land Consolidation
- (e) Group on Informal Settlements
- (f) Group on future scenarios for land administration
- (g) Group on Fraud in land administration.

II. Technical Cooperation activities

38. The UNDA Ninth tranche project "Strengthening national capacities for sustainable housing and urban development in countries with economies in transition" was completed at the end of 2017 with the regional workshop in November in Geneva. Within the project, the Guidelines and the policy paper on the development and implementation of the National

Action Plan in the field of housing, urban development and land management were prepared. According to these Guidelines, the governments of Armenia, the Republic of Moldova, Serbia and Tajikistan, drafted their National Action Plans to implement the recommendations of the country profiles.

39. The UNDA Tenth tranche project "Evidence-based policies for sustainable housing and urban development in selected countries with economies in transition" has been carried out in collaboration with UN-Habitat. Under this project, advisory missions and national validation workshops were organised in Georgia, Kyrgyzstan and Ukraine. A policy paper with the methodology for data collection relevant to the 2030 Agenda and New Urban Agenda was also drafted. A group of international experts have proposed recommendations to the draft legislation on the provision of housing and rental housing in Ukraine. The recommendations were presented during the mission to Kiev in April 2018; accompanying the mission a round table to discuss the best international practices and the housing challenges in Ukraine was also organized.

40. Under the Regional Programme of Technical Cooperation, a city level assessment to prepare a smart sustainable city profile for Voznesensk, Ukraine, using the U4SSC Key Performance Indicators, was conducted. Capacity building workshops on affordable housing were organised in Almaty and Astana, Kazakhstan; Grodno, Belarus; and Kiev, Ukraine. Work has commenced on the Technical Guidelines on formalization of informal real estate and informal markets and will be finalised in spring 2018.

41. The UNDA Eleventh tranche project "Strengthening evidence-based and participatory housing policies and strategies" is being carried out in collaboration with UN-Habitat. The project includes cooperation with the Ministry of Regional Development of Bulgaria on the review of the draft National Housing Strategy and other documents. A joint workshop on housing and land administration is also planned for 15-16 November 2018 to be held in Sofia.

III. Cooperation with other UNECE subprogrammes

42. The Committee continued to cooperate, especially on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, with ECE subprogrammes: (1) Environment, (2) Transport, (3) Statistics, (4) Economic Cooperation and Integration, (5) Sustainable Energy, and (7) Forestry and Timber.

43. Coordination with other United Nations Regional Commissions, which was established for participation in the Habitat III Conference, continued on relevant housing and urban development issues. Coordination with the United Nations system working in the ECE region for the implementation of the New Urban Agenda has been also established.

A. Sustainable housing and real estate markets

44. The Committee has engaged in regular cooperation with the Committee on Sustainable Energy on energy efficiency in buildings. The two Committees co-lead the activities of the Joint Task Force on Energy-Efficiency Standards in Buildings.

B. Sustainable urban development

45. A seminar on "Land-Use Planning and Industrial Safety" was held in Brussels, Belgium, on 16 and 17 May 2018, organized jointly with the ECE Industrial Accidents Convention, in cooperation with the host country and the European Investment Bank.

46. The secretariat cooperated with the Transport, Health and Environment Pan European Programme (THE PEP) for the preparations of the Sixth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health (Ostrava, Czech Republic, 13 to 15 June 2017). The cooperation with THE PEP will continue in line with the Committee's activities on sustainable urban development for the implementation of THE PEP priority goal 5.

47. The secretariat cooperated with the ECE Innovation Policies Development Section for the finalization of the U4SSC deliverable "Guidelines for circular cities".

C. Country profiles on housing and land management

48. The secretariat cooperates with the ECE Environmental Performance Reviews (EPR) team, by participating in the review of the EPR draft chapters on housing and environment. The two teams also exchange relevant country information.

IV. Cooperation with other international organizations

A. Sustainable housing and real estate markets

49. The Committee is working together with UN-Habitat, the UN Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights, Housing Europe Federation, the World Economic Forum, Union of Cities and Local Governments, the European Commission, Eurocities and many other pan-European networks of organizations as well as cities, on issues related to affordable and healthy housing.

50. The Committee continues to cooperate with international organizations, such as the International Standards Organizations, the Passive House Institute, the European Buildings Performance Institute, the Copenhagen Center on Energy Efficiency, etc. to implement the activities of the Joint Task Force on Energy Efficiency Standards in Buildings.

B. Sustainable urban development

51. The Committee continues its cooperation with OECD, UN-Habitat and other organisations involved in the interagency National Urban Policy Programme through its ongoing technical cooperation activities. The secretariat participated in the OECD 23rd meeting of the Working Party on Urban Policy on 16 April 2018 in Paris. The secretariat also participated in the Second Partners Meeting of the National Urban Policy Programme.

52. The Committee continues its cooperation with ITU, 16 other UN entities and other stakeholders through the global initiative U4SSC through its meetings and its outputs. It also continues its cooperation with the Organization for International Economic Relations (OIER), the UNDP offices of Armenia and Ukraine for the development of the activities under the programme United Smart Cities.

53. The Committee also continues its cooperation with ECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section. "The Sky is the Limit" high-level panel event was jointly organised with the ECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section and the ECE Housing and Land Management Unit, together with the FAO Liaison Office in Geneva as part of the International Day of Forests on 31 March 2018, to showcase innovative approaches to integrate green spaces into cities via urban farming, vertical forests, wood construction and architecture.

C. Land Administration

54. Under the Memorandum of Understanding on Land Administration and Management with the FAO, the Working Party on Land Administration is collaborating under a bi-annual cooperation plan with FAO, as well as with the World Bank and the European Commission Joint Research Centre. The Working Party regularly cooperates on the organization of joint events and studies with other international organizations involved in land administration in the region, including UN-Habitat, the United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management (UN-GGIM), the EU INSPIRE Initiative, the European Land Information Service, EuroGeographics, and others. The WPLA organizes annual meetings of international organizations and agencies, which serve as a neutral platform to discuss how to best work together to improve land management and land administration in the ECE region.

D. Country Profiles on Housing and Land Management

55. To ensure the long-term sustainability of the results of the country profiles, the Committee established cooperation with UN-Habitat and UNDP offices in countries where the profiles are being developed. UN-Habitat and UNDP offices in Kazakhstan and Belarus contributed to the preparation of the Country Profiles for these two countries.

V. Major activities planned for 2019 and beyond

56. The Committee will continue to contribute to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the achievement of the housing, urban and land-related Sustainable Development Goals, especially Goal 11 "Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable" and its targets: (11.1.) Ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services; (11.3) Enhance inclusive and sustainable urbanisation and capacity for participatory, integrated and sustainable human settlement planning and management in all countries; (11.6) Reduce the adverse per capita environmental impact of cities, including by paying special attention to air quality and municipal and other waste management; (11.7) Provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces. Due to its cross-cutting nature, it will also contribute to the achievement of other goals, particularly to the Goals 3, 6, 7, 9, 13, 14 and 17. Due consideration will be given to the integration of climate change mitigation and adaptation measures into national policies, strategies and planning in the area of housing, urban development and land management. Further, this work will promote the implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030, the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development, the UN-Habitat Global Housing Strategy, the Geneva UN Charter on Sustainable Housing, the Geneva Ministerial Declaration on Sustainable Housing and Urban Development, the International Guidelines on Urban and Territorial Planning, and the Strategy for Sustainable Housing and Land Management in the ECE region for the Period 2014-2020.

57. The following activities are expected to be implemented.

A. Review of and follow-up to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development, Geneva UN Charter on Sustainable Housing and other relevant agreements

1. Aligning Committee activities with the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development and the New Urban Agenda

58. The Geneva Ministerial Declaration on Housing and Urban Development adopted in 2017 stressed the importance of the regular monitoring and following up on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the New Urban Agenda, the UN-Habitat Global Housing Strategy, the Geneva UN Charter on Sustainable Housing and other documents; and of strengthening the capacity of national governments, including their statistical services, and improving mechanisms for information exchange and using monitoring tools that ensure a coherent methodology across the region and global comparability.

59. To promote the implementation of the Ministerial Declaration, a regional observatory on urban related SDGs will be launched to support efforts of governments and stakeholders in the development of evidence based policies, including on urban and housing related data collection for reviewing the 2030 Agenda's implementation. The observatory will include an interactive web portal containing regularly updated data and information on the state of housing and urban development at national and local level in countries of the ECE Region; a set of training materials, including e-learning, on data and knowledge collection for the review of achievement of the SDGs, relevant reports and publications with best practices. The observatory work will include regular thematic meetings and discussions with active participation of key stakeholders and academia. It will promote new cross-sectoral activities, as the 2030 Agenda creates new possibilities for collaboration that reflect the linkages between different goals and targets. These activities will allow to exploit existing synergies, increase the efficiency of its work and have a multiplying effect on its actions to implement the SDGs. The establishment of the regional observatory will support capacity of national and local governments to implement relevant measures to achieve the SDGs, especially the SDG 11 on cities and human settlements.

60. A guidance document on aligning Committee activities with the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development, the New Urban Agenda, the Geneva UN Charter on Sustainable Housing and the Geneva Ministerial Declaration on Sustainable Housing and Urban Development is expected to be prepared and adopted by the Committee; and regional and subregional consultations to be organised during 2018-2019. A policy paper and guidelines for the collection and analysis of the national data on housing and urban development (UNDA Tenth tranche project, UN-Habitat) will be finalised.

61. A series of international conferences and workshops will be organised to discuss the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, the New Urban Agenda, the Geneva UN Charter on Sustainable Housing in the ECE region, including in Sofia, Bulgaria; Prague, Czech Republic; Milano, Italy; Tbilisi, Georgia; and Glasgow, the UK.

2. Implementation of the Geneva UN Charter on Sustainable Housing

62. The Committee will continue to promote the implementation of the Geneva UN Charter on Sustainable Housing through the organization of advisory services, capacity-building and dissemination activities, and through the network of Geneva UN Charter Centres. In addition to the already established centres in Albania and Estonia and the UK, Charter Centres will be established in Armenia, Austria, Belarus and other countries. An integrated capacity building programme will be developed jointly by the Centres.

B. Sustainable housing and real estate markets

63. To promote sustainable housing and real estate markets, the Committee will focus on housing finance and management, support governments in improving energy efficiency in buildings, facilitating the maintenance, management and refurbishment of existing housing stock and developing real estate markets.

1. Affordable and decent housing

64. Based on recommendations a study conducted in 2017-2018 by the Committee secretariat on opportunities for cooperation on capacity building on affordable housing with partner organisations, the Committee will develop a two-year action plan for capacity building activities under the Committee's programme of work and will start its implementation. The capacity building action plan will include trainings and other activities on topics of sustainable housing, smart sustainable cities, energy efficiency in buildings (including management of multiapartment and high-performance buildings), sustainable urban development, governance in land tenure and other.

65. The Committee will conduct a survey and prepare a policy brief on homelessness in association with Housing Europe, FEANTSA (European Federation of National Organisations Working with the Homeless) and other stakeholders. The topic of homelessness is a multidimensional issue that intersects with Sustainable Development Goals 1 No Poverty, SDG 3 Good Health, and SDG 11 Sustainable Cities. Further, this policy paper will reflect the ethos of the Geneva UN Charter on Sustainable Housing as it supports member States to ensure the access to decent, affordable and healthy housing in the ECE region.

2. Energy efficiency in buildings

66. The Joint Task Force on Energy-Efficiency Standards in Buildings will continue its work with a focus on capacity building to promote energy efficiency in buildings, including through the improved management of multiapartment buildings.

67. In cooperation with the ECE Committee on Forests and the Forest Industry (COFFI), a workshop on building standards will be organised with COFFI at its 76th session in Canada in November 2018.

3. Real Estate Market Advisory Group

68. The Real Estate Market Advisory Group will continue to contribute to the work of the Committee on energy efficiency, smart sustainable cities. REM will also contribute to the work of the Fire Safety Standards in Buildings. Furthermore, it will contribute to the WPLA benchmarking series surveys. The Advisory Group will also work on two key studies on the topic of sharing economy and housing finance.

69. The Advisory Group will organize several meetings as per its programme of work. Two key events will be organised for the Advisory Group in 2018: Sofia, Bulgaria on 15-16 November 2018 and Milano in December 2018. The REM has also proposed to organize events on the Policy Framework in New York in 2019 and on the Condominium Management together with the European Mortgage Federation in Brussels in 2019.

B. Sustainable urban development

70. The secretariat will support the Committee in promoting an integrated approach to the planning of cities and human settlements. The focus will be on activities relevant to

spatial planning towards compact, efficient and inclusive cities, low-carbon and disaster resilient urban development and in addressing the challenges of informal settlements.

1. Smart Sustainable Cities

71. The Committee secretariat will support application of innovative financing approaches for sustainable housing and urban planning by developing smart sustainable districts in Astana, Kazakhstan; and Grodno, Belarus. Smart city profile will be finalised for the city of Voznesensk, Ukraine.

72. The Fourth Meeting of the U4SSC initiative, as along with other events, will be organized jointly with the ITU and other key partners in 2019. A joint event with ITU and FAO has been proposed as part of the World Forum on Urban Forests which will take place in Mantova on 28 November to 1 December 2018. A workshop on "Water and Cities" will be organised in 2019 jointly with the secretariat of the ECE Water Convention Protocol on Water and Health.

C. Land administration and management

73. To assist member States in improving land administration and land management, the Committee activities will promote security of tenure and improvement of cadastres and land registries, including institutional arrangements for land administration. This cluster will address land registration, e-governance, land tenure, spatial information and cadastres. An emphasis will be placed on issues of innovation and capacity building in land administration.

74. The WPLA will organize workshops on the following topics:

- Joint Conference of ECE WPLA, FIG and TCG "Economy, Society and Climate Change - Current Trends and Solutions for the Built Environment, Construction Industry and Real Estate" 7-9 November 2018 - Athens, Greece
- Key registers for the implementation of the SDGs, Norway, May 2019
- Jointly with Surveyor General of State Lands, Natural Resources Canada (Sector Lands and Minerals) and WPLA "How to assure rights of indigenous peoples and minorities" in Canada in 2019.

75. Further, the Working Party will finalize the study on benchmarking in land administration studies on the costs for registration/transfer of real estate and registration of mortgages for the ECE region, and work on an update of the Land Administration Systems Survey in 2019. The update on the Fraud in Land Administration Systems will be finalised in 2019.

76. The ECE will also continue its cooperation with the Food and Agriculture Organisation, UN-Habitat and the GLTN on land management issues.

77. The Working Party will hold their 11th session on 27-28 February 2019.

D. Country profiles on housing and land management

78. The Country Profile Belarus will be launched in May 2019. Future country profiles will focus on the review of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, the New Urban Agenda and other international commitments. Follow up to the country profiles will also include monitoring of, and support to, the implementation of the country profiles'

recommendations, including through the preparation of national action plans on sustainable housing and urban development and model projects.



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Committee on Housing and Land Management

Seventy-ninth session

Geneva, 4 and 5 October 2018

Item 2(a) of the provisional agenda

Review of the implementation of the programme of work 2018-2019

Review and follow-up to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, the New Urban Agenda, the Geneva UN Charter on Sustainable Housing and other relevant agreements

Information on the development of the guidance document for the alignment of the activities of the Committee on Housing and Land Management with the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development, the New Urban Agenda, the Geneva UN Charter on Sustainable Housing and other agreements

Note by the Secretariat

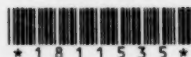
Summary

The Committee at its seventy-eighth session in October 2017 requested the Bureau to prepare a comprehensive draft guidance document for the alignment of the activities of the Committee to support implementation of the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development and other key agreements within its existing mandate.

This document provides with information on the progress with the development of the guidance document.

The Committee is invited to take note of the preparation of the Guidance document and to invite the Bureau to finalise the document and present it for the Committee's endorsement at its eightieth session in October 2019.

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I. Introduction and objectives of the document

1. The adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development by the United Nations General Assembly in 2015, the adoption of the New Urban Agenda in 2016 and other key international agreements established new policy frameworks for future activities on sustainable housing and urban development at all levels. Above all, an integrated and coordinated approach at the global, regional, national, subnational and sub-regional levels, with the participation of all relevant stakeholders, is required for meeting the commitments in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the New Urban Agenda and others.

2. The ECE Committee on Housing and Land Management is an intergovernmental body which works since 1947 to address shared housing and land management challenges across 56 member States in the ECE region. The Committee facilitates the dialogue between governments and supports knowledge transfer on innovative practices, gives advice and develops policy guidelines to address common housing, urban development, and land administration and management problems.

3. The Committee's objectives are

(a) Improving policy harmonization on housing, urban development, and land administration and management among government agencies in the ECE member States;

(b) Addressing major housing, urban development, and land administration and management challenges in the ECE region;

(c) Providing guidance for establishing more efficient legal and institutional frameworks for housing, urban development, and land administration and management, and

(d) Strengthening national and local capacity on affordable and adequate housing, smart and sustainable urban development and effective land administration and management.

4. The 2030 Agenda, the New Urban Agenda and other key policy documents together with the reform agenda by the Secretary General on the repositioning of the UN development system have direct implications for the future work of the UNECE Committee on Housing and Land Management.

5. The Committee at its seventy-eighth session in October 2017 discussed strategic approaches and challenges to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the New Urban Agenda and other relevant global and regional agreements at national level. It was stressed the need for the governments and the UN system to re-focus their activities to ensure they effectively support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and address other relevant international commitments, through the Regional Forum for Sustainable Development in the ECE (March 2018) and the High-level Political Forum (July 2018).

6. Following the discussion, the Committee requested the Bureau to prepare a draft guidance document for the alignment of the activities of the Committee to support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development and other key agreements within its existing mandate. Preparation of the guidance document started in March 2018 by the secretariat under coordination of the Committee Bureau. It is expected that the first draft will be presented for discussion at the seventy ninth Committee session in October 2018. After the draft is discussed with the Committee and updated taking into account comments and proposals for revisions, it will be presented for the Committee's endorsement at its eightieth session which will take place in October 2019.

7. The objective of this document is:

(a) To provide the Committee with background information for the preparation of the guidance document and an overview of the key agreements which have implications for the Committee's future work at regional, national, subregional and local levels; and

(b) To inform the Committee on the preparation of the guidance document, including on its schedule and the approach.

II. Key global and regional agreements and their content related to urban development, housing and land administration and management

8. In the last few years, governments adopted at the global and regional level several milestone agreements that have direct implications to the work of this Committee. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development¹, the New Urban Agenda² along with other key global and regional agreements, including the Geneva UN Charter on Sustainable Housing which was endorsed by the Committee in 2014, highlight the need for policy reviews and refocus at the global, regional and national levels to ensure they are aligned with objectives and targets of these global agreements.

9. The United Nations initiated the process of integrating the aims of Agenda 2030 and other global agreements in its work at the global, regional and national levels. The United Nations Secretary General published his first report "Repositioning the United Nations development system to deliver on the 2030 Agenda: ensuring a better future for all" (A/72/124-E/2018/3) in June 2017 and the second report "Repositioning the United Nations development system to deliver on the 2030 Agenda: our promise for dignity, prosperity and peace on a healthy planet" (A/72/684-E/2018/7) in December 2017. These reports marked the beginning of a change process of the UN development system to align its activities with the Agenda 2030 and other global agreements; to promote the organisation agility, higher effectiveness and efficiency. In May 2018, the General Assembly adopted Resolution 72/279 on "Repositioning of the United Nations development system in the context of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system" in which, among others, it reaffirmed the role and functions of the United Nations development system at the regional level, including the regional economic commissions and the regional teams of the United Nations development system, and underlined the need to continue to make them fit for purpose in supporting the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

A. UN global agreements

10. 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: The United Nations General Assembly adopted in September 2015 the "2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development". It represents an ambitious, transformative global framework for sustainable social, economic and environmental development with the primary commitment of "not leaving anyone behind". Achieving the 2030 Agenda Sustainable Development Goals is highly dependent on the joint efforts by governments and stakeholders working at national, global, regional and local levels, including especially private sector, civil society and local communities. The 2030 Agenda stresses the importance of an integrated approach to addressing diverse challenges and the importance of cooperation between and within countries.

¹ http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1&Lang=E.

² <http://habitat3.org/the-new-urban-agenda/>

11. Sustainable urban development is the focus of SDG 11 – “Making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable”. Work on achieving SDG 11 is crucial for implementing the 2030 Agenda since more than half of the planet’s inhabitants live in cities and this continues to grow. Further, given the interconnectedness of the SDGs, most of them are directly relevant to the work of the Committee due to the integrated nature of housing and urban development challenges (see Annex 1).

12. New Urban Agenda (NUA)³: The Habitat III Conference in October 2016 was the first of the UN global conferences discussing the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Conference approved the NUA, which embodies a major shift in UN policy as it emphasizes the direct link between urbanization and sustainable development. The NUA addresses principles for the planning, construction, development, management, and improvement of urban areas along its five main pillars of implementation: national urban policies, urban legislation and regulations, urban planning and design, local economy and municipal finance, and local implementation. The NUA directly links to SDG 11, it emphasises the important role of local authorities in achieving urban related goals and promotes territorial approach to the implementation. As part of the follow-up to and review of the implementation of the New Urban Agenda, the first of five quadrennial reports was produced in 2018, “Progress on the implementation of the New Urban Agenda: report of the Secretary-General”⁴ (A/73/83-E/2018/62).

13. Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing Development⁵: The Addis Ababa Action Agenda, adopted in July 2015 is a holistic and forward-looking framework that aims at further strengthening financing for sustainable development and the means of implementation for the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development.

14. SENDAI framework for Disaster and Risk Reduction 2015-2030⁶: The Sendai Framework was adopted at the Third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in Sendai, Japan, on March 18, 2015 and strives to tackle the issue of disaster and risk reduction. Building on the Hyogo Framework for Action, the SENDAI framework focuses on improving livelihoods and health in all of its dimensions through “the implementation of integrated and inclusive economic, structural, legal, social, health, cultural, educational, environmental, technological, political and institutional measures that prevent and reduce hazard exposure and vulnerability to disaster, increase preparedness for response and recovery, and thus strengthen resilience”. Effective disaster risk management contributes to sustainable development and tackles underlying disaster risk drivers, such as poverty and inequality, climate change and variability, unplanned and rapid urbanization and poor land management.

15. Paris Agreement on Climate Change⁷: The Paris Agreement was elaborated within the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), which was adopted in December 2015 during the 21st Conference of the Parties. For the first time all nations undertook ambitious efforts to combat climate change and adapt to its effects, with enhanced support to assist developing countries to do so. As such, the Agreement charts a new course in the global climate effort. Ensuring that housing and cities are resilient to climate change and extreme weather conditions is critical for sustainable urban development.

³ <http://habitat3.org/wp-content/uploads/NUA-English.pdf>

⁴ <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/1628008?ln=en>

⁵ http://www.un.org/esa/ffd/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/AAAA_Outcome.pdf

⁶ http://www.preventionweb.net/files/43291_sendaiframeworkfordren.pdf

⁷ http://unfccc.int/files/essential_background/convention/application/pdf

B. Regional documents and processes

16. It should be noted that the implementation of the global agreements at regional level is critical for success. At the regional level, the role of the UN Regional Economic Commissions is presented as a key element to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development⁸ (see paragraphs 82 of the New Urban Agenda⁹, paragraphs 86 and 87 of the SG report, Repositioning the United Nations development system to deliver on the 2030 Agenda: ensuring a better future for all¹⁰, paragraphs 18 and 19 of the General Assembly on Repositioning the United Nations development system¹¹, article 87 of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda¹², and article 12 of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030¹³).

17. The ECE Committee on Housing and Land Management serves as a central contact point for any country within the region that needs advice or information on sustainable housing, urban development, and land administration and management, as well as a neutral platform for the exchange of experience, knowledge and best practices.

18. Geneva UN Charter on Sustainable Housing¹⁴: The Geneva UN Charter on Sustainable Housing is a non-legally binding document that aims to support member States as they seek to ensure access to decent, adequate, affordable and healthy housing for all. It was endorsed by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe on 16 April 2015. The Charter established an important thematic framework for the regional cooperation on housing in the ECE Region.

19. Following the endorsement of the Charter, the ECE Committee on Housing and Land Management approved in December 2016 a framework for the implementation of the Geneva UN Charter on Sustainable Housing¹⁵, including recommendations for the establishment of the Charter Centres for implementation of the Charter in ECE member States. The Centres perform activities such as an active dissemination of information on the Charter and its principles, advisory services, capacity building at all levels, networking with cities, regions and other stakeholders, etc. So far, two centres have been established in Estonia and Albania and several other countries reported during 2017 about their intentions to establish such centres.

20. Country Profiles and City Profiles assist governments to improve the performance of their housing, urban development and land management sectors. Capacity-building projects support urban planning especially in countries in transition through the cooperation between cities and national governments and the private sector, and further develop inter-sectoral collaboration among different departments of city governments.

21. The Geneva Ministerial Declaration on Sustainable Housing and Urban Development¹⁶ was adopted by the Ministers and the Heads of Delegation participating in the Ministerial Segment of the seventy-eighth session of the ECE Committee on Housing and Land Management on the occasion of the seventieth anniversary of the establishment of the Committee. The Ministerial Declaration reiterates the importance for governments at all

⁸ <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/rio20/futurewewant>

⁹ <http://habitat3.org/the-new-urban-agenda/>

¹⁰ <http://undocs.org/A/72/124>

¹¹ <http://undocs.org/a/res/72/279>

¹² http://www.un.org/esa/ffd/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/AAAA_Outcome.pdf

¹³ http://www.unisdr.org/files/43291_sendaiframeworkfordren.pdf

¹⁴ https://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/hlm/documents/Publications/UNECE_Charter_EN.pdf

¹⁵ http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/hlm/documents/2016/ECE_HBP_2016_2.en.pdf

¹⁶ Available in <http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=48305>

levels and relevant stakeholders in the ECE region to promote the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the New Urban Agenda, the Geneva UN Charter on Sustainable Housing and other relevant global and regional commitments. The Declaration underlines the importance of regularly monitoring and following up on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and other agreements.

22. Urban Agenda for the EU¹⁷: The European Union's 28 member countries adopted the Urban Agenda for the EU in May 2016. For the EU, urban development is a key issue: more than 70% of EU citizens live in cities where, at the same time, approximately 85% of the GDP of the EU is generated. The Urban Agenda for the EU is a way to enable cities in Europe to better influence related EU legislation, to focus funding instruments through different funds into cities and to share experience of urban authorities across Europe. The core of the Urban Agenda for the EU is development of partnerships in 12 thematic areas in total. These partnerships enable cities, countries, EU institutions and other stakeholders, such as non-governmental organizations and the private sector, to work together on an equal basis and to look for and find common ways to improve urban areas in the EU. The partnerships were launched in the following areas: Integration of migrants and refugees, air quality, urban poverty, housing, circular economy, digital transformation, urban mobility, job opportunities and skills in local economy, adaptation to climate change, energy transformation, sustainable land use and solutions based on nature principles, and innovative and responsible public procurement. The partnerships generate an important knowledge base for the future work of the EU member countries to address urban development challenges.

III. Approach to the preparation of the guidance document

23. To implement the above mentioned global and regional commitments, policy changes at all relevant level need to be implemented in order to achieve the SDGs, objectives and targets related to other global and regional agreements. These policy changes will require **stronger horizontal and vertical cooperation** among governments and all relevant stakeholders, establishment of **partnerships**, strengthening **data driven and indicator based review process** and application of **innovative financial mechanisms** to support the implementation process. Given the need to implement this shift to the new way of developing and implementing policies, programmes, projects, **capacity building** and establishment of **effective platforms for international cooperation and exchange of best practices**.

(a) Firstly, there is a need in promoting an inclusive approach through **intersectoral cooperation at country and local level** and **diverse partnerships**. National and local governments, at all levels, as well as parliaments, civil society organizations, businesses and philanthropic organizations, the scientific and research community, academia, volunteer groups and other stakeholders — all have a part to play in implementing the 2030 Agenda and other global agreements;

(b) Secondly, there is a need to develop capacities for the data driven and indicator based review and follow up of the implementation of the global and regional agreements. The Sustainable Development Goal global indicators which will be applied at national as well as local level. Data collection remains a key challenge. Addressing this **gap in data collection** is crucial to better inform the measurement of progress, in particular for those targets which do not have clear numerical targets;

¹⁷ http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/policy/themes/urban-development/agenda/pact-of-amsterdam.pdf

(c) Through the 2030 Agenda, member States should develop and implement a holistic approach to the SDGs, including through **innovative financing mechanisms**. Promoting innovative financing mechanisms will allow countries to better prevent and manage risks and develop mitigation plans. Demonstration projects will need to be developed to showcase such innovative mechanisms:

(d) Finally, there is a need in further building capacity of countries for data collection and for the development of national and global baselines of the implementation.

24. The guidance document will address the above generic principles in its analysis. The preparation of the guidance document is coordinated by the Committee secretariat in consultation with the Bureau and is led by Professor Brian Mark Evans, The Glasgow School of Art; and head of the UN Charter Centre on Sustainable Cities. The guidance is being prepared through a desk-based review of 'state of play' in ECE member states of aligning of countries activities with the 2030 Agenda and other agreements, organisation of a survey of member States and writing the study report. A background report and draft guidance document will be made available as information document ECE/HBP/2018/Inf.1 and will be presented to the Committee.

25. The guidance document will further describe a proposed approach for the alignment with the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and other documents through creation of more agile organisations at all level exploiting opportunities for cross-sectoral work.¹⁸ In this context, this alignment should be understood as a dynamic process, where new opportunities can be explored and acted upon, while respecting existing mandates and within currently available resources, to better serve the demands of member States and the UN system. Opportunities will likely lie in new cross-sectoral activities, as the 2030 Agenda creates new possibilities for collaboration that reflect the linkages between different goals and targets. These activities would allow the organization to benefit from existing synergies, increase the efficiency of its work and have a multiplying effect on its actions to implement the SDGs. It is therefore necessary to nurture a cooperative culture with partners that facilitates undertaking cross-sectoral activities.

26. This strategic orientation builds on the experiences and achievements of cross-sectoral work in ECE, with already multiple instances of cooperation between subprogrammes, both formal and informal. At the ECE, the first step in translating this strategic orientation into practice is the identification of high-impact areas where multiple SDGs converge (SDG "nexus clusters"). The criteria used for the identification of these areas include: (1) Relevance of the areas proposed for the current and future challenges facing the ECE region, so that work on these areas contributes to serve existing or anticipated demands and make the organization future-proof; (2) Existence of core ECE expertise and products to address multifaceted issues in these areas by integrating activities under different subprogrammes and engaging into meaningful partnerships.

27. At the ECE, four possible high-impact areas have been singled out as a result of the ongoing reflection: (a) Sustainable use of natural resources; (b) Sustainable and smart cities; (c) Sustainable mobility and smart connectivity; (d) Measuring and monitoring SDGs (methodology). The value of these high-impact areas is multiple, as they can serve to: concentrate resources to address the multiple aspects of complex, multifaceted issues; facilitate partnerships, including with other organizations of the UN system; give potential access to new constituencies and promote a cross-sectoral dialogue with external clients; and provide more visibility to dispersed efforts under a common theme.

¹⁸ This section is based on the ECE Executive Committee Informal document No. 2018/12.8

28. Nexus area "Smart and sustainable cities" SDG 11 on sustainable cities and communities is one of the identified core SDGs for ECE. Many ECE subprogrammes are contributing to the implementation of targets under this SDG. In addition, SDG 11 has linkages with many other SDGs, including the other eight ECE core SDGs. The solution of many sustainable development challenges – in transport, energy, economic development, management of natural resources and many others – passes through finding and implementing appropriate solutions at the city level. The rate of urbanization is high in the ECE region and it is expected to continue to increase. In some parts of the region, where urbanization rates are comparatively low, faster growth can be expected. Cities are and will increasingly become a major focus for the delivery of SDGs. At this level, the linkages between SDGs often appear as particularly visible and the need for integrated solutions is strong. The high-impact area "Smart and sustainable cities" can group existing ECE activities under a common umbrella. This will provide a new narrative to integrate and communicate our work, while reaching out to new constituencies. It will also facilitate strengthening existing partnerships and developing new ones.

29. Moving forward with the implementation of global agreements, a critical step for realizing the sustainable development goals and other goals under these recent international agreements, is an integrated and coordinated approach at the global, regional, national, subnational and local levels, with the participation of all relevant stakeholders.

30. The Committee is invited to take note of the preparation of the Guidance for the alignment of the Committee activities with the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development, The New Urban Agenda and the Geneva UN Charter on Sustainable Housing; and to invite the secretariat to further develop the guidance and present it for the Committee's endorsement at its eightieth session in October 2019.



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Item 2(b) of the provisional agenda

Review of the implementation of the programme of work 2018-2019

Sustainable housing and real estate markets

Capacity building on affordable and decent housing

Note by the secretariat

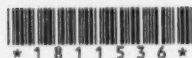
Summary

The Committee at its seventy-eighth session (ECE/HBP/190 para 21) requested the Bureau to elaborate on concrete proposals for the cooperation on capacity building in affordable and decent housing with its key partner organisations.

This document contains short information on and results of a study conducted by the Committee secretariat related to an assessment of opportunities for the cooperation of the Committee in capacity building in affordable and decent housing.

The Committee will be invited to endorse the recommendations and request the secretariat to develop an action plan for capacity building activities under the Committee's programme of work based on conclusions and recommendations of the study. The Committee will also be invited to conduct a survey of member States to identify the needs and priorities of member States for capacity building activities.

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I. Introduction

1. Capacity building and sharing of best practices and lessons learned in all the areas of housing and land management is an important component of the Committee's programme of work (ECE/HBP/2017/7). The Committee's secretariat is organising national and regional workshops, seminars and training courses for policymakers and/or experts in the ECE region on housing and land management (including real estate) and spatial planning on regular basis.

2. These capacity building activities are aimed at supporting the implementation of the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development, the New Urban Agenda, the Geneva UN Charter on Sustainable Housing and other relevant global and regional agreements at national and local levels. The capacity building activities organised by the ECE are based on the needs assessments in the countries. These assessments are regularly conducted through regional thematic surveys, national reviews, the Country Profiles on Housing and Land Management, as well as city level studies, Smart Sustainable City Profiles¹.

3. The need for a closer and more systematic cooperation in developing capacities for affordable and decent housing has been widely recognised by the Committee and its partners active in the ECE region. The Committee is actively cooperating on capacity building activities for affordable housing with UN-Habitat, the UN Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights, Housing Europe Federation, the World Economic Forum, Union of Cities and Local Governments, the European Commission, Eurocities, Union of Capitals and Megacities of CIS and many other global and regional organisations and networks, cities, private sector and academia. On energy efficiency in buildings, the Committee works jointly with the ECE Committee on Sustainable Energy; it also cooperates with international organizations, such as the International Standards Organizations, the Passive House Institute, the European Buildings Performance Institute, the Copenhagen Center on Energy Efficiency, etc. to implement the activities of the Joint Task Force on Energy Efficiency Standards in Buildings. Multiple capacity building activities are already organised in cooperation with the Committee's partner organisations, however, these joint activities are usually held on an ad hoc basis.

4. At its seventy-eighth session, the Committee on Housing and Land Management requested its Bureau to explore areas of possible cooperation with key partner organisations invested in affordable and decent housing sphere and to elaborate upon concrete proposals to instigate a more systematic and long term cooperation on capacity building (ECE/HBP/190 para 21).

II. The Role of the ECE in capacity building activities in the region

5. As one of the regional commissions, the ECE, is uniquely positioned as a neutral intergovernmental platform to support exchange of knowledge and best practices between its member States, as well as to develop regional policy guidelines, promote dialogue on housing policies and practices between governments and a wide range of stakeholders. The ECE Committee on Housing and Land Management implements a number of activities, which are of great value for the ECE member States. These activities include annual sessions of the Committee, thematic conferences and workshops on housing, land

¹ See more in <http://www.unece.org/housing/publications.html>

and urban, advisory missions, studies and publications and other training activities. In the last five years, the most common capacity building activities were workshops, followed by conferences, round-tables and informal expert group meetings. These took place in Geneva, Switzerland (where the Committee secretariat is located), Brussels (Belgium), Chisinau (Republic of Moldova), Yerevan (Armenia), Minsk (Belarus), Vienna (Austria), Kyiv (Ukraine), Washington DC (USA), etc. The key topics addressed by the ECE capacity building events are: sustainable housing, smart cities, energy efficiency in buildings, sustainable urban development, strengthening national capacities, governance in land tenure and other urban-related areas.

6. Moreover, the Committee has produced several important documents for the region, including the UNECE Strategy for Sustainable Housing and Land Management in the ECE Region for the period 2014-2020², the Geneva UN Charter on Sustainable Housing³, Regional Report on Sustainable Housing and Urban Development for the UNECE Region to Habitat III Conference⁴ and the Geneva Ministerial Declaration on Sustainable Housing and Urban Development⁵. These documents address the key challenges that member States face in ensuring access to affordable and adequate housing,^d sustainable urban development and land management.

7. ECE, in cooperation with national and local governments along with academia have established the Geneva UN Charter Centres of Excellence to promote the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, the New Urban Agenda and Geneva UN Charter at national and local levels. The Charter Centres have been established in Estonia, Glasgow and Albania, with seven other Centres in the works.

8. The Geneva UN Charter Centre in Estonia was established in 2016 in Tallinn, Estonia in cooperation with the Estonian Union of Co-operative Housing Associations (EKYL). EKYL is specialized in the development and organisation of training programs on housing management for local housing management associations in Estonia and for countries with economies in transition. The centre in Estonia focusses its capacity building activities on management of multiapartment buildings.

9. The Geneva UN Charter Centre in Glasgow, United Kingdom is coordinating activities to implement the Geneva UN Charter on Sustainable Housing as well as the New Urban Agenda. The Centre conducts research, develops capacity building on sustainable urban development in association with ministries, cities, NGO and academia. The key topics for research and capacity building include: investigation of comparative urbanism through integrated planning; town, neighbourhood and city design; and landscape art, design and ecology.

10. The Charter Centre in Albania is in the works, with an update on its activities to be presented in the near future.

III. Objective of the paper

11. This paper summarises a study on cooperating on capacity building programmes, which was conducted by a consultant on a request of the secretariat of the ECE Committee on Housing and Land Management. The aim of the study is to analyse opportunities for long-term cooperation between the Committee on Housing and Land Management and its

² <http://www.unece.org/housing/strategy-sustainablehousing.html>

³ <http://www.unece.org/housing/charter.html>

⁴ <http://www.unece.org/housing/habitat3regionalreport.html>

⁵ <http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=48305>

partners on building capacity for affordable housing in the ECE region. The methodology of the study included a desk research on the existing capacity building activities via a survey. The survey was sent to twenty existing and potential partner organisations that work on housing and urban related issues in the ECE Region. Based on the responses, the consultant conducted interviews with representatives of nine organisations who expressed interest in collaborating with the ECE. The report was prepared on the outcomes of the survey and the interviews.

12. Due to time and financial restrictions, the consultant interviewed only a selected number of existing and potential partners. The Committee's capacity building activities are organised in association with several partners in public, private, NGO and academic sectors (Please see a list of partners who provided inputs to the study in Annex 1).

IV. Summary of the study results

13. The outcome of the study found that the Committee's integrated capacity building initiatives on providing affordable housing is to reflect the Committee's expertise in its implementation of the 2030 Agenda the New Urban Agenda, Geneva UN Charter on Sustainable Housing and other regional agreements and guidelines. Hence, all future workshops and training programs are to reflect the principles of the aforementioned agreements.

14. The paper recommended that at the national level, training programs should reflect the findings and recommendations of the ECE flagship product Country Profiles on Housing and Land Management. The Country Profiles contain reliable data, in-depth analysis and concrete policy recommendations for the member State that was reviewed. In cases where Country Profiles were not conducted, an assessment of the housing situation and policies should be conducted prior to organising capacity building activities.

15. Further, the capacity building activities are to be tailored to the needs of trainees. In cases where multiple actors are involved in capacity building activities, it is important that each actor has a specific and unique responsibility. An analysis of the role of different stakeholders in housing policies and management is available in the UNECE report on the outcomes of the survey "Challenges and priorities in housing in the UNECE Region (2013).⁶ Further, individualised training curriculars are to be developed for different client groups – local authorities, homeowner associations, national policy makers, private sector representatives. A proposed training activity is "executive training". The aim of this training is to train leading practitioners (8-10 people) from a specific country (which may reflect the recommendations of the Country Profile on Housing and Land Management prepared for the country).

16. Capacity building activities should be tailored to the specific region's economic, social and cultural context. It is also important for training materials to be made available in local languages. It is crucial to engage the national and local stakeholders. Subregional meetings such as UNECE-UN-Habitat training on housing policies for CIS countries organised in Belarus in 2011, have proven to be effective in engaging all relevant stakeholders. Such subregional workshops could be organised in Eastern Europe, Caucasus, Central Asia as well as in South-Eastern Europe and in new EU member States.

17. As per the interviewees, topics for joint capacity building activities should include: affordable housing, homelessness, urban regeneration, regional and urban planning,

⁶ http://www.unecce.org/fileadmin/DAM/hlm/documents/Publications/Sythesis_Report.pdf

sustainable development concept, climate change, innovation and housing finance. The Committee addresses most of these topics in their activities, with plans to extend its areas of work into other aspects of housing, urban and land management.

18. The study identified that it is important to intergrate an interactive approach to capacity building activities whilst also addressing the international agreements such as the Geneva UN Charter on Sustainable Housing, 2030 Agenda and the New Urban Agenda. It is important that not only are the contents of these agreements covered comprehensively but also that the needs of the stakeholders are addressed. If these factors are addressed, a tailored made capacity building approach can be created for each country.

19. The study recommends that a regional portal with elearning materials be made available. E-learning can be delivered speedily and with ease, and the costs associated with the learning and development for the stakeholders are drastically reduced. The study recommends that a webportal with e-learning are to be structure according to following themes:

- Affordable housing
- Tenancy law
- Urban Agenda
- Social housing agency
- Energy efficiency
- Subsidy
- Security of Tenure
- Desegregation in housing
- Cities in Transition
- Housing Finance
- Funding and Delivery of Affordable Housing Supply
- Housing in the European countries
- Financial support to Social Housing

20. It is also important that the regional portal be made available in different languages, for example, the Geneva UN Charter on Sustainable Housing text is available in 13 languages.

21. The Committee will be invited to endorse the recommendations of this study. It will also request the secretariat to develop a two year action plan for capacity building activities under the Committee's programme of work based on conclusions and recommendations of the study. Further, since the latest assessment needs was drafted in 2013, the Committee is also invited to conduct a survey to identify the needs and priorities of member States in relation to capacity building. An update to the needs assessment is also important to reflect the global agreements: the Geneva UN Charter on Sustainable Housing, the Geneva Ministerial Declaration on Sustainable Housing, the 2030 Agenda and the New Urban Agenda.

Annex

ECE Committee on Housing and Land Management cooperating partners on capacity building which provided inputs to the study

UN-Habitat, a UN specialised agency which is mandated to address the issues of urban growth, is focusing on human settlements worldwide with extensive experience, from the highest levels of policy to a range of specific technical issues and expertise in all urban matters. It works in a number of themes related to urban development processes, including, among others: planning and design; housing and slum up-grading; resilience; gender; human rights etc.

Housing Europe Federation, the European Federation of Public, Cooperative & Social Housing. Established in 1988, Housing Europe is a network of 45 national & regional federations gathering 43.000 housing providers in 24 countries that manage over 26 million homes, about 11% of existing dwellings in Europe. Their policies and actions include advocacy work in economy, energy, urban & social issues, monitoring of the affordable housing sector via the European Social Housing Observatory, capacity building for its members and more.

Housing Partnership for the European Union is one of the thematic Partnerships, established following the Amsterdam Pact on the Urban Agenda for the European Union. The Partnership is a new instrument for multilevel and cross -sectorial (horizontal and vertical) cooperation to deliver more effective solutions to urban challenges and ensure a more integrated approach at the level of Urban Areas. The objective of the Housing Partnership is: to have affordable housing of good quality with a focus on public affordable housing, state aid rules and general housing policy.

FEANTSA – is the European Federation of National Organisations Working with the Homeless. The ultimate goal is an end to homelessness in Europe by engaging in constant dialogue with the European institutions, national and regional governments to promote the development and implementation of effective measures to end homelessness; conducting and disseminating research and data collection to promote a better understanding of the nature, extent, causes of, and solutions to, homelessness; and promoting and facilitating the exchange of information, experience and good practice between FEANTSA's member organisations and relevant stakeholders with a view to improve policies and practices addressing homelessness.

Institute for Housing and Urban Development Studies (IHS), a research and training institute which works to develop human and institutional capacities, to reduce poverty and improve the quality of life in cities, specialized in training and education on Urban management, housing, urban economics, etc.

Metropolitan Research Institute (MRI) – is an independent institute in Budapest, Hungary, with a multidisciplinary team of experienced professionals (economists, sociologists, planners) working on different aspects of urban development. In the core of the interest of MRI research is the development and performance of European cities.

POLIS University in Albania, which is a private higher education institution established according to the Albanian legislation. It is specialized in areas of urban planning, design and management; Housing; Environment; Business management; Environment; etc.

University of Thessaly - The main mission of the University is the promotion of scientific knowledge through research and the contribution to the cultural and economic development

of the local community and wider society. It is known for its excellent research performance and outstanding scientific achievements, in accordance with the international standards.



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Item 2(e) of the provisional agenda

Review of the implementation of the programme of work 2018-2019

Country profiles on housing and land management

Draft Executive Summary of the publication "Country Profile on Housing and Land Management - Belarus"

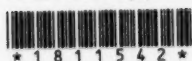
Note by the secretariat

Summary

This document contains the draft Executive Summary of the Second Country Profile of Belarus. It provides an overview of the housing and urban development situation in the country and key policy recommendations.

The Committee will be invited to endorse the policy recommendations and approve the publication of the Country Profile of Belarus.

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I. Introduction

1. The first Country Profile on Housing and Land Management for the Republic of Belarus was published in 2008.¹
2. The Committee on Housing and Land Management, at its seventy-sixth session, approved the preparation of the second Country Profile on Housing and Land Management for the Republic of Belarus.
3. The secretariat undertook a preliminary mission to the Republic of Belarus in December 2017, and a research mission in May-June 2018.
4. This document contains the draft Executive Summary of the Country Profile and key selected policy recommendations. The full draft publication is available in the information document Draft ECE Country Profile of Housing, Urban Development and Land Management of Belarus, ECE/HBP/2018/Inf.14.

II. Executive Summary

5. The executive summary provides an overview of the housing and urban development situation in the Republic of Belarus, and preliminary policy recommendations.

A. General situation

6. The total area of the Republic of Belarus is approximately 207,600 km²; its population is 9.45 million. The country has no access to the sea. Its favourable economic and geographical location contributes to the development of trade relations with its neighbours, both to the east and the west. Transit routes and main oil and gas pipelines from Russia to the European Union pass through the country.
7. In 2010-2016, the GDP of Belarus increased in comparable prices by 11.2%, with an increase in labour productivity during this period of 17.8%. GDP per capita at purchasing power parity in the Republic increased from 15,400 US dollars in 2010 to 17,700 US dollars in 2015.
8. By 2015, the real GDP of Belarus was almost 2.5 times higher than in 1981. However, since 2010, the growth rate of the economy has slowed down significantly, and it is not clear whether it will be able to return to past rates, as the overall slowdown in economic development in both the European Union countries and in the Russian Federation can strongly influence the growth dynamics of the Belarusian economy.
9. Belarus has made considerable advances in housing policy, urban planning and development and land administration system since the last Country Profile study carried out in 2008.

B. Housing sector

10. The state has a strong presence in the housing sector, not only in the construction of housing, but also in the management, maintenance and modernization of the housing stock.

¹ <https://www.unecce.org/fileadmin/DAM/hlm/prgm/cph/countries/belarus/CPBelarus.e.pdf>.

1. Housing Policy

11. The housing policy is aimed at ensuring the availability of housing for citizens, and creating safe and comfortable living conditions. The legal basis of the housing policy is well developed. The state Housing Policy of the Republic of Belarus for the period until 2016 (adopted in 2013) is aimed at improving the living conditions of the population by (i) providing state support to certain categories (vulnerable groups) of citizens; and (ii) developing existing, and creating new, financial mechanisms for housing construction on a commercial basis, increasing funding for rental housing.²

12. The state programme "Construction of housing for 2016-2020" (adopted in 2016) defines the goal of the housing policy - to increase the level of provision of affordable and high-quality housing to the population. This goal is expected to be achieved primarily through the use of funds from non-budget sources of financing and long-term lending to citizens for the purchase of housing, and also through the use of budgetary resources. The measures are expected to stimulate the development of the housing market.

13. State programmes for affordable housing provision are aimed at stimulating the acquisition (ownership) of housing by citizens. Measures of state support include preferential loans for the acquisition of newly constructed housing and the allocation of land plots for individual housing construction.

2. Housing demand

14. In 2017, 678,000 households were registered as needing improved housing conditions, which is 20% less than in 2010. Households in need of improved living conditions include those with less than 15 m² per person of the total area of living space; the amount of household income is not taken into account for registration. Citizens who are registered as needing improved housing conditions have the right to receive a loan under preferential terms and subsidies for housing construction.

15. There is a separate registry of households which are entitled to receive social housing from the state. The legislation defines twelve categories of citizens entitled to social housing (including, disabled, senior citizens, young families and other)³. The households eligible for social housing are those from these twelve categories for whom the average monthly aggregate income for each family member does not exceed an approved minimum subsistence level.

3. Rental housing

16. Rental housing includes state and municipal housing stock, as well as residential premises that are privately owned (mainly by citizens) that are rented on market terms. The total share for rental housing in the state (including municipal) housing stock in 2017 was 5.8%.

17. State and municipal housing stock properties are rented under contracts of "commercial" hiring or contracts of social housing hiring.

4. Housing construction

18. Due to the slowdown of the economic development, rates of housing construction have been declining since 2014. In 2017, 3.79 million m² were built, which is the lowest amount during 2011-2017.

² Adopted in 2003.

³ Please see full list at <http://xn----htbdbkahjcdxp6bzg5a.xn--90ais/statya-111>

19. State developers have advantages over private developers in the provision of land for construction. Since 2013, only state developers have the right to build housing for citizens who are in need of improved housing conditions and who have received preferential loans for housing construction.

5. Housing fund

20. The total area of the housing stock as of 1 January 2018 was 256.4 million m². 70% of the housing stock is in urban settlements. The total area of the multi-apartment housing stock is 70% of the total housing stock.

6. Management, maintenance, renovation and modernization of apartment buildings

21. In accordance with the legislation, the following actors are involved in the management of multi-apartment buildings:

- owners of individual apartments, if the apartment house does not have more than 10 apartments;
- associations of owners (an analogue of partnerships of homeowners in other countries) or organizations of developers (housing and construction consumer cooperatives);
- authorized representatives of a state organizations responsible for the management of services and maintenance of apartment buildings.

22. Private organizations do not have the right to manage multi-apartment buildings. Associations of owners and housing construction cooperatives have the right to maintain apartment buildings by themselves or to involve in renovation and maintenance housing and communal services organizations, but only state-owned ones.

23. Currently, more than 52% of associations of owners and housing construction cooperatives have entered into contracts for the maintenance of apartment buildings with state housing and communal services organizations, while 48% independently maintain their apartment buildings.

24. Major capital renovation of apartment buildings are carried out within the framework of five-year programmes adopted by local executive bodies, and annual schedules are in accordance with confirmed amounts of financing.

25. Financing for the capital renovation comes from two sources - the local government budgets and funds paid by the owners and tenants of premises in apartment buildings. The owners of the premises pay a prescribed capital repair fee to the account of the state organization of the housing and communal services serving the apartment building or to a special account opened by the executive authorities for the accumulation of the funds.

26. The capital renovations do not include works for thermal modernization of residential buildings due to its very high cost. However, over 56% of residential buildings have annual energy consumption for heating of 120-200 kWh / m² while the required standard of consumption of heating energy by a residential house is 90 kWh / m². Therefore, there is a need in the government support and coordination of organization of thermal renovation in residential buildings.

27. There is an ongoing discussion on approaches to the organization of large-scale thermal modernization of the housing stock. It is proposed that the thermal modernization is financed both from the funds of apartment owners and from local budgetary funds and the inhabitants pay for the thermal modernization paid into special bank accounts opened by

local governments. Further local governments use these funds for thermal modernization according to a plan that they establish.

28. The Preliminary recommendations are as follows:

- To increase the volume of housing construction, it is recommended to create equal conditions for public and private housing developers;
- To meet the housing needs of low-income households and to ensure labour mobility, it is recommended to develop a strategy for the development of an affordable rental sector, including non-public rental housing; and
- To improve the management and maintenance of multi-family housing, it is recommended:
 - to abolish restrictions on the participation of private businesses in the provision of housing management and maintenance services;
 - to change the approach to the organization and financing of capital repairs and modernization of housing; and
 - to support the activities of associations of owners as stand-alone customers for the renovation and thermal modernization of apartment buildings, including through the provision of subsidies and soft loans.

C. Housing construction

29. The state programme of socio-economic development until 2020 established correlation of the cost of housing for purchase with the average wage level in Belarus. According to the Government, this goal can be achieved by, among others, maximizing the use of domestic building materials. To this end, the regulatory and legal framework provides for the application of special measures to support domestic producers in the implementation of tender procedures. Thus, the legislation regulating procurement during construction introduces a preferential treatment regarding the price of participation in the tender for goods (works, services) produced in Belarus, as well as in countries with which Belarus has concluded preferential trade agreements. This measure, aimed at supporting domestic producers, should, in the Government's view, help reduce the cost of housing construction. However, lack of competition among domestic providers of construction materials creates significant imbalance in the market of building materials. It allows the domestic producers to establish a higher price for building materials, which ultimately leads to a further rise in the cost of construction.

30. It should be noted that these and other measures aimed at curbing the cost of housing construction, implemented without strengthening control over anti-competitive practices, have not made it possible to achieve significant progress in improving the affordability of housing for the population. The price per square metre is growing, which is especially evident in the secondary housing market, where the average cost per square metre is almost double the average wage and cost of housing construction.

31. The preliminary recommendations are as follows:

- Assess the effectiveness of the measures applied to support national producers and of the measures for the technical regulation of imports of building materials and products, in order to identify possibilities for reducing the cost of housing construction. Implement additional measures to promote competition in the supply of construction materials for construction.

- Establish national regulations and standards which would stimulate the introduction of innovations in the housing construction and management and increase spending on financing research and development in the housing sector.

D. Land administration and management, including the legal and institutional frameworks

32. Belarus has made tremendous advances in its land administration system since the last Country Profile study carried out in 2008. Many of the recommendations in that Profile have been implemented, leading to a significant improvement in the security of tenure and the availability of data on the internet. Cadaster and land management have digitized their processes to a large extent and have created a true one-stop-shop service; proof is the rank on the Doing Business list: Registering Property position 5, in 2017.⁴

33. In general, society trusts the state organizations involved in land administration: the state Property Committee (SPC), the National Cadaster Agency (NCA) and the Institute for Land Use named "Belgiprozem", that is, the registration and cadastral services. Taxation on real estate is accepted as fair. Belgiprozem delivers the basis for the taxation, and appeals are quite rare.

34. The land registry is under the responsibility of the NCA. The intake and processing of contracts takes place in the district. The local offices are not subordinate to the NCA to the local governments. However, they report to the NCA for monitoring and evaluation purposes.

35. There is a huge interest in improving their performance (one-stop-shop, geoportals) and make every effort to automate the process digitalization of registers of real estate, cadastral and land management data is ongoing. In 2013, Belgiprozem launched a geo-portal with much relevant information.

36. Although interest rates are still high (14-16% on average, and 8.5% for improving dwellings, in 2017), the mortgage market is improving: interest rates are dropping (10.1% in 2018) and the number of mortgages is increasing significantly. However, banks are cautious to provide loans, and citizens cannot easily afford the interest rates, which are still relatively high.

37. Spatial planning is done at district and town level. Masterplans are well designed and are available in the geo-portal. Expropriation is used to make land available for construction and for other use (parks, road, etc). Fair compensation is given for the value of the land, as well as for the loss of production in future years, both for agricultural and forest land.

38. The Preliminary recommendations are as follows:

- Establish a National Spatial Data Infrastructure (NSDI). "Infrastructure for Spatial Information in Europe" is an EU initiative for creating an open and interoperable data infrastructure. Although elements of an NSDI are in place, a strategy should be drafted that covers the full implementation of the NSDI, focusing on identifying, searching, publishing and providing data sets with a geo-spatial component in both the Government and the private sector. The NSDI should include a legal framework, a financing model, specific standards, meta data, etc.

⁴ See at <http://www.doingbusiness.org/data/exploreeconomies/belarus>

- Introduce a system of authentic registers. Although the registers for land, cost, address, etc, are considered as key/authentic registers, in practice, some specific elements of key registers are missing (legal framework, quality requirements, reporting of errors, etc).
- Amend the taxation system. It is recommended to raise the tax rate on real estate objects (land including the building) at market value prices. Three types of taxable objects would be distinguished: agricultural land, real estate objects, and special objects (industry, commercial buildings, office buildings, etc).
- Evaluate the position of the registrar. The registrar has an important role in the process of registration. However, his/her position can be compromised regarding undesired pressure from clients. It is recommended to carefully evaluate the pilot (introducing an intermediary person) and see if the registrar can be "disconnected" from the client. This could be achieved by introducing a front desk where clients could bring their applications, which would then be processed elsewhere in the country.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the functioning of the registration system, since the responsibility is shared between the central office and the district office. The curator function seems strong, and should be maintained. It is also important to check the relationship with Belgiprozem, being responsible for the cadastral map and the preparation of technical document.
- Although the quality (completeness, actuality, integrity) has been considerably improved, it appears that further improvement is much needed (security title); this is acknowledged by the authorities. It is recommended to develop a programme that includes the analysis of the present situation and the preparation of a sound strategy for data improvement, the resources needed and clear delineation of tasks between the various parties. The SPC should oversee design, instruction and monitoring and the NCA, Belgiprozem, local offices and subordinate bodies could carry out activities.

E. Urban development

39. Implementation of the main directions of the state urban development policy of the Republic of Belarus for the periods of 2007-2010 and 2011-2015 contributed to the successful implementation of several state and regional programmes for urban development.

40. The country achieved remarkable stability in economic and social terms. However, the economy will have to cope with new trends, including digitalization and industry, which will impact the cities where industries are located.

41. Social inclusion and gentrification are subjects which are likely to gain more relevance for Belarus in the future.

42. The construction, with investors from different countries, of the China-Belarus Industrial Park in Minsk created jobs for 100,000 people, many of whom come from abroad. The Park offers major economic development opportunities for the city, the region and the entire country. However, there is a risk of possible imbalance; major investments in Minsk could make the capital even more attractive for people and investments, and may encourage more people to leave other urban and rural areas of the country.

43. The City of Minsk and the Minsk region (oblast) are implementing a joint General Plan, but there is no joint planning authority for the planning of the city and the region.

44. One of the innovative elements of the General Plan of the City of Minsk is that it allows for the protection of the area between the first and the second outer rings of Minsk as a "green belt". The green belt could, in the future, become indispensable as a green lung for the growing metropolis to remain a green city. Further development of the legal and regulatory framework for the protection of this green belt should be envisaged.

45. The preliminary recommendations are as follows:

- Challenges and opportunities related to the economy, social inclusion and the environment should be addressed through the development and implementation of a comprehensive National Urban Policy. It would include a vision for cities and for the overall city system of the country. It would suggest policy recommendations for long-term urban development and its enabling environment. As a coherent set of policy decisions of the Government, it could also support and coordinate sector policies (transport, economy, research, etc.) to better plan future investments and urban developments. In addition, the Policy could be used to implement the UN 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development, the New Urban Agenda and the Geneva UN Charter on Sustainable Housing;
- Consider establishing a joint planning authority and a steering committee for the City of Minsk and the Minsk region;
- Consider the option of establishing a joint coordination body (e.g. steering committee) and a regional planning authority to coordinate the development, and oversee the implementation, of the green belt project in the General Plan of the City of Minsk;
- Update the General Plan so that it would better describe protected areas and areas to be developed. All stakeholders from the city and the region, including civil society, should be engaged in the planning process of the city and the region. This would unlock the full potential of the city regarding urban and regional development.
- Consider implementing capacity development programmes for urban and regional planners. Establish a training programme to foster exchange, knowledge transfer and peer-to-peer learning;
- Consider more active cooperation with EU programmes, such as the "Infrastructure for Spatial Information in Europe" programme for cross-border, transnational and interregional cooperation between cities and regions, to benefit from EU-funded projects.